

## "Celebrating a Great Start!"

About 4 years ago I was diagnosed with [type 2 diabetes](#). At the time I weighed 333 lbs. Not only was I confirmed a diabetic, but I was also dealing with swelling in my lower extremities, shortness of breath and limited mobility. My knees were giving out under the strain; to the point where a cane became necessary. Climbing stairs was only slightly worse than descending them and woe-be-to-me if there was a fire drill in the building. If it had been an actual emergency, the slowness of my descent would have caused everyone behind me to be at risk.

At first, my cholesterol levels weren't too bad, but my triglycerides were entirely too high. My Glycated Hemoglobin A1c test, which measures the average of blood sugar levels over the last 3 months, was well above 9 (normal is less than 7.0%). And at least a portion of my shortness of breath was attributed to fluid retention, particularly in my feet, ankles, and lower legs.

Thankfully, I was not yet deemed to require insulin and so my doctor put me on medications which addressed the fluids, the triglycerides and the diabetes. Of course, a dramatic change in my diet and entire outlook about food was critical.



I read a number of books and articles and did some research on my own to add to the information my doctor provided. I began to understand better how my food choices were going to affect my future.

Soon I was beginning to lose some weight. More sensible eating, combined with portion control resulted in slow but steady weight loss. With guidance from my doctor, I set some realistic goals and at the end of the first year I weighed 274. My doctor was thrilled and so was I! One of the first things I noticed was that my ability to walk was improving.

Then the weight loss slowed. During the second year, I reached 246 (down 28 more pounds), and then hovered there for a full year. I was stuck on a plateau and disappointed that things seemed to be at a standstill. I didn't gain anything, but neither did I lose anything. I kept a diary of both my blood sugar tests (twice daily) and my weigh-ins (once per week). I fluctuated within about a five pound window but my weekly weight graph records a very long, relatively flat line. This was a difficult period! Once you've embraced a concept, set goals and begun to achieve them, it's hard to keep encouraged when it seems no progress is being made.



Slower weight loss began again in recent months. I've now lost just over 100 pounds total! I'm walking better, the knees are doing better, I no longer use a cane, I can tie my own shoes, bend over and retrieve things from the floor, and walk without shortness of breath dogging every exertion.

My triglycerides and cholesterol levels are all within normal ranges and the A1c is now 6.7. These levels are substantial evidence that I'm on the right track and they've been achieved without the assistance of any particular diet group or plan.



Doctor Burtka says slow weight loss is a good thing because it gives the body time to adjust. That not only seems reasonable, it also appears to describe my experience pretty well. We've re-evaluated my specifics; things like height and bone structure, and still feel that the goal weight we originally set is the right one. So, although I still have pounds to go; at this juncture, I see it as do-able and intend to keep at it.

A little added incentive - Dr. Burtka says when I reach my goal weight, he's going to make me a "poster child" for the American Diabetes Association! That may seem a bit far-fetched, but hey - stranger things have happened!

Submitted by Marjorie Kinnee, DLEG, Cadillac Place - Detroit